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Seasons

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Virginia Commonwealth University

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Seasons

Documentation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Interdisciplinary Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Artist Statement

A sense of place and time has been the unconscious focus of my adult life. While living in Hawaii I often searched for ancient rock carving sites. These art forms have the ability to convey the mystery, magic and history of previous times. I use human figures, beads and various textiles with similarities to these petroglyphs as a powerful metaphor for my search to find a place that is home.

Seasons

Introduction

Always walk firmly with each step and face each situation in life in a direct manner. This advice, given to me as a small child, has influenced me throughout my life. I have always looked forward and persevered with set goals in mind. However, when it came to my artwork I found that my creative soul demanded that I not only look forward but that I must look within and around me. I must touch the textures of the world and feel the magic in life's details. It is only by doing this that I can tap into the creative energy that allows me to develop my work.

I entered the Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) program to learn how to be an artist and to be able to convey my new knowledge to the students I teach. Previously, as a quilt teacher I taught a variety of process-oriented classes based on specific techniques. My goal was to identify the process of being creative. During my studies in the MIS program I identified, claimed and learned to honor my intuitive process. As a person and artist who approached life and art as a series of steps to work through, developing my intuitive self was very important to my growth. The structure of the MIS program allowed me to explore a variety of techniques that I was able to combine into an expression that became my own. The manner in which the different professors presented their expertise and encouraged my development allowed me to grow as an artist and as a teacher. Their encouragement and support gave me the courage and

confidence that I could be a success at integrating new techniques with my personal abilities. The interaction with my fellow students allowed me to appreciate the importance of adult learning styles. As I developed as an artist I was able to overcome struggles of seeing only what I needed to accomplish as a specific set goal. As a result of this program I began to see the world in a new light, and was able to transition into an artist who incorporates mind, body and spirit into her art.

Influences

Quilt making brought me into the creative world. Its structure and established set of rules provided a framework in which to develop my sense of color and design. Quilt making has taken many forms throughout my lifetime. I grew up overseas and moved many times. An integral part of the continuity I felt during this time was due to my mother and her sense of family and community. She provided stability during these tumultuous years of childhood. The concentration on figurative elements and particularly those of women is reflected in my art and relates to the importance mothers have. In my life my mother provided the fertile soil and ground from which I have grown. This is represented in my work through the incorporation of petroglyph images. The hidden locations of rock carvings, and the requirement that they must be searched for, represents the depth of the important influence of my mother. The permanency of rock carvings represents the staying power of those influences.

Geometric and symmetrical designs played an important part in my early designs, which were influenced by the contemporary quilting expert, author, fabric designer and teacher, Geraldine (Jinny) Beyer (1941-). Beyer's strategy is to research a topic of interest from its first historical use. Then, she deconstructs a concept until it is in its most basic form and rebuilds an idea step-by-step. This is the basis for her ability to explain a complex concept in terms that all levels of learners can understand, whether it be in the areas of drafting, geometry, symmetry or color theory. I believe that this is her true gift to the art of quilt creativity. It has greatly influenced my approach to quilt making. Beyer has influenced the depth in which I investigate a topic. I know that a complex idea may be better understood when broken down.

As I developed my competency in this media, I began to take into account various aspects of the world around me and incorporate them into my art. Joseph Cornell's (1903-1972) ability to create a visual story from found objects influenced my ability to notice the details in everyday life. His work *Taglioni's Jewel Casket* (1940) continues to fascinate me. He is able to convey a story through the incorporation of velvet, a rhinestone necklace, glass, jewelry fragments and glass cubes. The story that he conveyed in this small work of art was an inspiration for me when I imagined the stories that could be told with quilts in combination with other materials. I began to add detail with printmaking techniques, stitched and drawn lines and multiple layers of fabric

As I developed my portfolio of quilts, and was introduced to printmaking,

my imagery began to evolve from geometric to representational. I began to incorporate rendered objects that I observed in nature. This change was due to Beyer's influence of looking to the origins of images and idea, then bringing them forward. It also resulted from Cornell's influence of using everyday objects to tell a story that focused on life's details.

From Quilts to Prints and Back Again

My first quilt, made many years ago, was created in the Hawaiian style. This style differs from traditional patchwork quilting in which small units of fabric are stitched to create a block design and then the blocks are pieced together. Stitched quilting lines are curved or straight complementing the geometric pieced units. In Hawaiian style quilt making the center medallion design is typically appliquéd in place with the quilting design replicating the edge of the appliquéd design. In developing my design for *Our Hawaiian Life* (Appendix, 1), I researched Hawaiian culture and learned the importance and power of story by way of chants, dances, rock carvings and legends. *Our Hawaiian Life* incorporates stylized images of pineapples, Ti plants, ocean waves and bird of paradise blossoms in the central appliquéd design. The stitched lines of quilting echo and reinforce the design elements. The importance of recording the cultural history of Hawaii was reinforced by the narrative aspects of Cornell's work.

After this quilt, I investigated and made many other styles of quilts.

However, the imagery and narrative aspects of the Hawaiian quilt stayed with me. As I was introduced to new media and ideas, I continued to incorporate narrative and symbolic aspects into my work. One of the first pieces created in my studies in the MIS program was *Time AKA the Pickle Jar* (Appendix, 2). As a mother of two teenage children at the time, my life was full of responsibilities as well as my coursework. Time management was a priority for me. When I learned about the Pickle Jar Theory of time management I wanted to create a quilt so that I would not forget the important lessons represented by this concept. This theory states that time is represented by a jar, with our most important priorities being represented by large stones. Concerns that are not as important are represented as pebbles, and finally chores are represented as sand and water. To indicate the large rocks in the jar, I folded squares of brown silk fabric and stitched them in place. The folds show the complexity of the important concerns in my life. Next, I selected turquoise silk to replicate the small, oval pebbles, these are also hand appliquéd in place. Then, I stitched a layer of black bridal tulle over the appliquéd squares and oval shapes to represent water in the jar. I sewed lime green, rust and copper colored glass beads to the piece to signify sand. Finally, I cut out the letters T, I, M and E from copper colored loosely woven fabric, black netting and black bridal tulle. These were then stitched in place. This piece represents the importance of setting priorities in my life and making sure that they stay in balance with the other tasks that are required of me.

In my coursework I was introduced to printmaking. *Petroglyph* (Appendix, 3) is an image with a figurative element created as a monoprint. The image was a variation on actual petroglyphs that I first viewed in Hawaii. I created the texture for the ground by first inking the printing plate. A stencil of a grid was placed on the printing plate, a second color was rolled over the plate and the stencil was carefully removed. Next, I inked a pasta cutter and rolled it over the plate creating thin organic lines from the upper left side to the lower right. At this time I printed the plate on paper. In a second printing I included a partial image of a ladder and a stencil of the petroglyph. Penciled shadings and coloration were added giving the effect of being printed on stone. This piece represented my growth as an artist because I had to face the uncertainty of how my image would turn out and the fear that it would not turn out well. I gained confidence from the successful completion of this piece. Since that time I have been able to tackle new techniques with more courage.

After my introduction to printmaking I decided to combine my fabric work with printing techniques, as well as use a more conceptual framework for each piece. My development during my MIS coursework had fluctuated between incorporating new techniques for creating images and an understanding of art and its context within society. Specifically, I wanted to delve into the subject of contemporary women in our society. *Women's Landscapes* (Appendix, 4) is a figurative and literal landscape. It is a combination of printed images, stitched lines and beading in a traditional quilt format. The images are of a scan of my

skeleton from a radioactive isotope uptake study. I used commercial fabric with a small printed design as the medium. A waterless lithography technique was used for each printing. I printed the ground for each skeleton first, and it was the same for each image. A second printing of the skeletal image overlay the ground. The value of each skeleton varied from high to low contrast. I developed this value transition to signify the perception by the advertising world that women become invisible as consumers as they age.

The visual impact of each skeletal image was enhanced through lines of stitching. Each skeleton was stitched in a different color: red, wine, and brown. I used beige as the ground color for each skeleton. I chose red to represent blood and the life force of women. Wine represents dried blood and the ceasing of the life force. Brown was selected to exemplify the return to earth and beige for the color of bones.

Beading along the lower portion of the quilt repeats the colors of threads used in stitching the images. The beads I selected support the change in perception of vitality to one of death and uselessness. They are a combination of red glass beads that reflect light and represent vitality; dark brown glass beads that blend into the color of the border fabric and represent the earth; and bone that represent the different bones of the body that are no longer connected to each other, and lay scattered on the ground.

My next piece, *Guides* (Appendix, 5), was the first of three works on paper that explored the combination of two images printed side-by-side. *Guides* is a

piece that is based on the concept of a two-block quilt. In a two-block quilt, two separate designs work together to complement and support each other. I incorporated two separate images in *Guides*, each telling a separate story but together creating a third. The image on the left is an abstract landscape. I created it by first inking a printing plate with a roller that was partially inked with a combination of brown, taupe and blue ink. Lines of ink were removed from the plate with a rubber eraser. Then, I printed the plate. Next, I noticed that a pasta portioning tool looked oddly like an incomplete heart, I applied ink and printed this image onto the first. The image of the "heart landscape" signifies the resulting ache from an incomplete relationship.

For the image on the right, I printed three figurative petroglyphs using a masking technique. I selected pink ink to be used for the figures to imply their female gender. Deep blue grey, ochre and brilliant pink printing inks were then overlaid on the print, adding more visual interest. The petroglyphic figure on the left, with its down-turned head, is positioned facing away with from the other two figures signifying isolation. The intensity of the ochre and pink ground behind the other two figures was selected to show their compassion and willingness to counsel, a role that women have played in my life.

The interplay of the two separate images tells the story of the support of friends and family in times of emotional despair. The open areas of the printed pasta-portioning tool represent the heart aches that I have experienced in my life. The counsel of friends have helped heal my heart and patched it together again.

The two prints being printed on the same paper represents the patching of my emotions.

In *Seasons* (Appendix, 6), musings on the connection between creativity, birth, women and the lunar calendar developed into a series of four fabric collages. While a variation of the two-block print described in *Guides*, *Seasons* brings me back to the media of fabric. However, rather than using design units that were stitched together in a traditional quilting technique, I chose to provide visual space between each unit by separating and securing them to horizontal metal bars. I selected commercially printed fabric in shaded values of tan, orange, red, brown and black to represent the colors of the earth, menses and night sky. Cutting circles, rectangles, crescents and zigzag pieces from these fabrics, I explored the formal interactions between these pieces. Using fusible adhesive I secured the different fabric elements to the ground. I selected thread to match each fabric for the quilting stitches, to emphasize a subtle dimensionality. The stitches provide a physical connection between the earth color of the ground and the circular and crescent moons. The cyclical nature of the moon is an important symbol to me. It reflects the cyclic nature of life, as well as my personal and creative growth and development through the MIS program.

Fabric was my entry into the world of art but now is just one of many tools I use to convey my thoughts. Now, my other tools include a combination of printed, stenciled, and stitched images that I blend with objects to create stories. My stories are more specific and meaningful due to the extension of materials I

consider viable for my expressions.

Conclusion

My journey through the MIS program is the story of accepting myself as person and trusting in the processes I use to create my art. My imagery has changed from literal readings to conceptual interpretations. I have found that not all stories need to be told in exact terms but can be implied. My initial creative process was very goal-oriented and I often met stumbling blocks in the process. My approach is now one of stopping to embrace each moment, being willing to take risks and explore, and to delve into myself for meaning.

As a teacher I am now more supportive of each student, stepping back to allow each one to learn to trust themselves in the creative process. I see myself as a guide rather than an instructor.

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Appendix

List of Figures

- Figure 1. *Our Hawaiian Life*, quilt, 23.5" x 23.5", 1980.
- Figure 2. *Time AKA the Pickle Jar*, quilt, 21" x 17", 2005.
- Figure 3. *Petroglyph*, monoprint, 13" x 15", 2007.
- Figure 4. *Women's Landscapes*, quilt, 23" x 34", 2007.
- Figure 4a. *Women's Landscapes*, detail.
- Figure 5. *Guides*, monoprint, 17.5" x 18", 2007.
- Figure 6. *Seasons*, quilt, 14.5" x 34" x 1.0", 2008.
- Figure 6a. *Seasons*, detail.

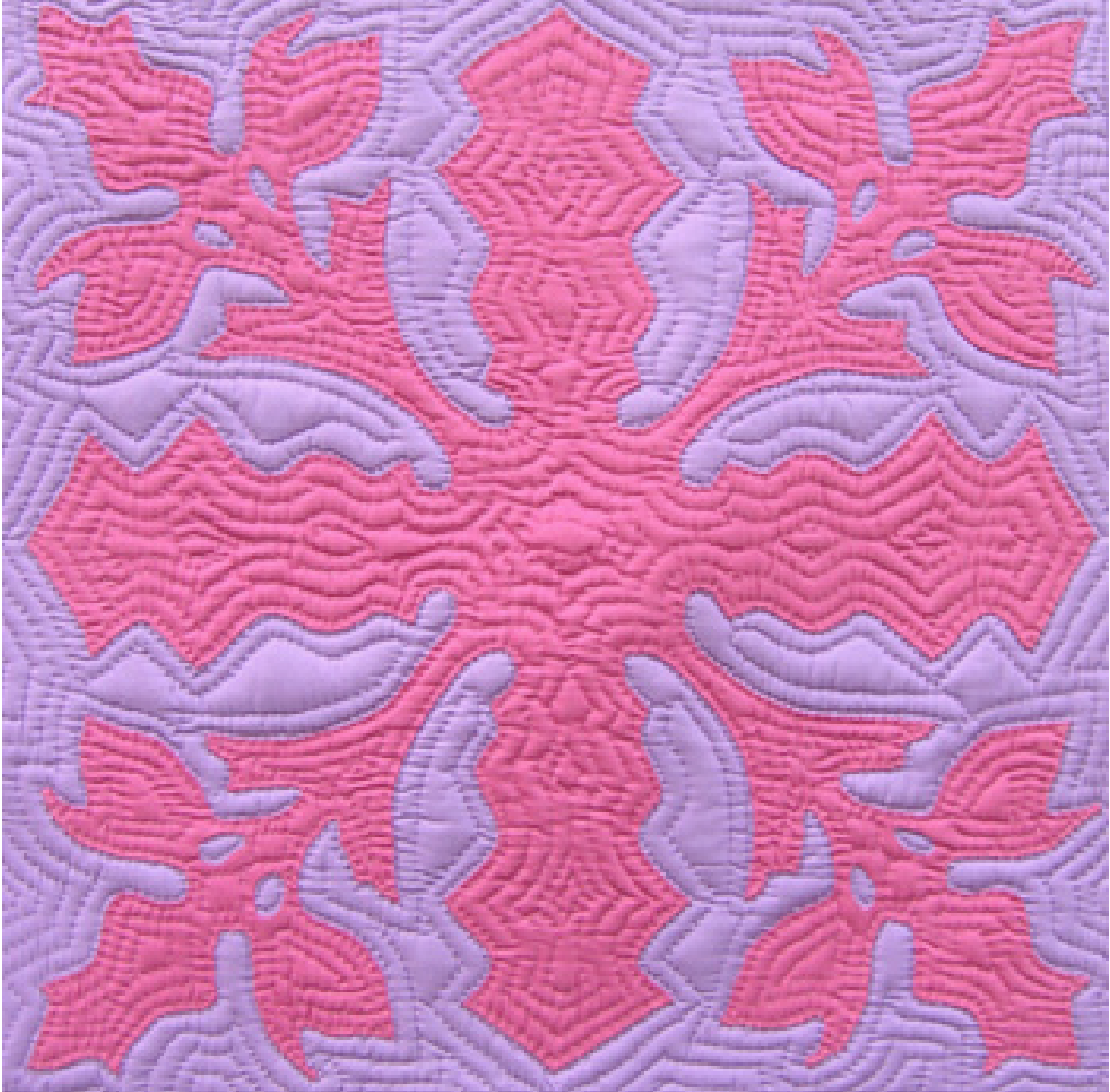


Figure 1. *Our Hawaiian Life*, quilt, 23.5" x 23.5", 1980.



Figure 2. *Time AKA the Pickle Jar*, quilt, 21"x 17", 2005.



Figure 3. Petroglyph, monoprint, 13" x 15", 2007.



Figure 4. *Women's Landscapes*, quilt, 23" x 34", 2007.



Figure 4a. *Women's Landscapes* (detail), quilt, 23" x 34", 2007.

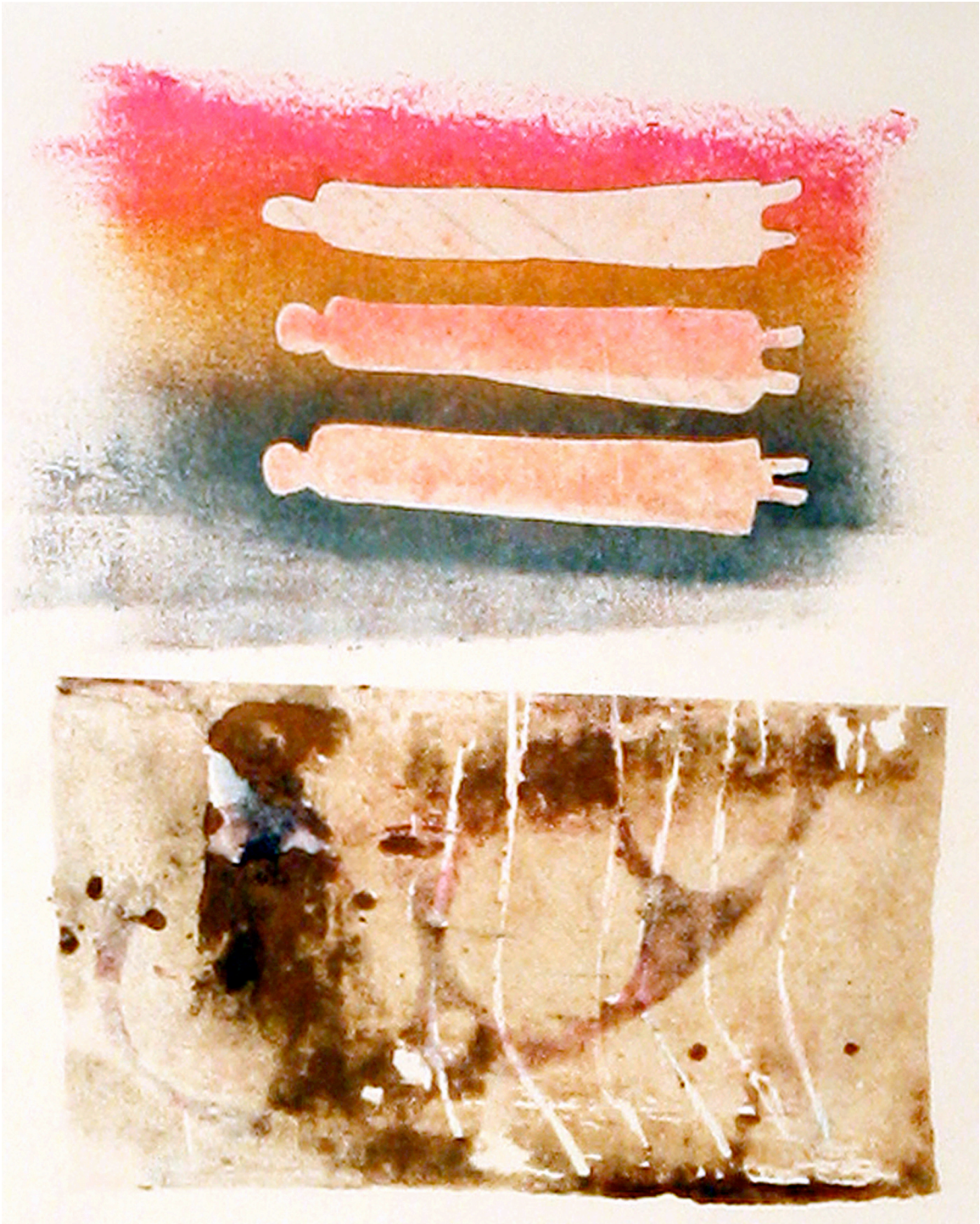


Figure 5. *Guides*, monoprint, 17.5" x 18", 2007.



Figure 6. *Seasons*, quilt, 14.5" x 35" x 1.0", 2008.



Figure 6a. *Seasons*, (detail), quilt, 14.5" x 34" x 1.0", 2008.

Paula Cathy Golden

Education

- 2009 Master of Interdisciplinary Studies, School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
1973 Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology, University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD

Certification

- 2001 Myers Briggs Type Indicator Instructor, Fairfax, VA
1978 Specialist in Blood Banking, American Society of Clinical Pathology, Chicago, IL
1973 Medical Technologist, American Society of Clinical Pathology, Chicago, IL

Selected Teaching Experience

- 1995–2009 Instructor, Jinny Beyer Hilton Head Seminar, Hilton Head, SC
2007 Instructor, International Quilt Festival, Houston, TX
2007 Instructor, National Quilting Association, Columbus, OH

Exhibitions

- 2009 *Material Images: Quilts From the Fringe of Tradition*, Virginia Quilt Museum, Harrisonburg, VA, Guest Curator: Linda Fiedler
2009 *Echoes of the Ancients*, Master of Interdisciplinary Studies Thesis Exhibition, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, Center for the Arts, Manassas, VA
2008 *Art of the Quilt VI*, Piedmont Arts Association, Martinsville, VA, Juror: Linda Fiedler
2006 *The Art of the Quilt V*, Piedmont Arts Association, Martinsville, VA, Juror: Linda Fiedler
2005 *Healing Quilts in Medicine*, The Torpedo Factory, Alexandria, VA, Juror: Judy House
2004 *Art of the Quilt IV*, Piedmont Arts Association, Martinsville, VA, Juror: Linda Fiedler
1994 *A Journey in Quilt Making - a One Woman Show*, Dumfries, VA

Selected Exhibits Curated

- 2008 *Quilts of Good Fortune and Fiber Artists @ Loose Ends: Identity Crisis*. Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival XXIV, Hampton, VA
2007 *Virginia is for...*, and *Fiber Artists @ Loose Ends: Rhythm of Women*, Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival XXIII, Hampton, VA
2006 *Quiltable Quotes*, Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival XXII, Hampton, VA
2003 *Celebrate Fairfax*, Bunnie Jordan and Hazel Carter, Fairfax, VA

Selected Professional Organizations

American Quilt Study Group, Lincoln, NE
Surface Design Association, Sebastopol, CA

Honors

- 2005 Nominated for *Outstanding Individual in the Arts, Kathleen K. Seefeldt Awards for Arts Excellence*, Prince William County, VA
- 2003 Selected for *Quilters Save Our Stories Project*, The Alliance for American Quilts, Asheville, NC
- 2001 Teacher of the Year: *The Professional Quilter Magazine*, Laytonsville, MD

Publications

- 2007 Golden, Paula, "Don't Get Caught by Internet Fraud." *The Professional Quilter*, Issue 101, Fall 2007, 23-24.
- 2006 Tricarico, Barbara, Hazel Carter, Paula Golden, Bunnie Jordan, and Maren Lindberg, *Quilts of Virginia: The Birth of America Through the Eye of a Needle*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Co., 2006.
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- 2001 Golletz, Morna McEver, "Teacher of the Year, Paula Golden." *The Professional Quilter*, Issue 75, Spring 2001, 6-8.
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- 1997 Golden, Paula, "Shattered Lone Star." *The Foundation Piecer*, Volume 2, Number 3, 10-12.

Public Collections

- 2008 *Heliotrope*. Brehm Center for Type I Diabetes and Analysis, University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor, MI
- 2007 *Broccoli and Cauliflower*. Brehm Center for Type I Diabetes and Analysis, University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor, MI
- 2005 *Garlic: for Body and Soul*. Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Wash, DC
- 1999 *Safe Harbor*. Fisher House, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD